

THE POLICY OF MEHMED II
TOWARD THE GREEK POPULATION
OF ISTANBUL
AND THE BYZANTINE BUILDINGS
OF THE CITY

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This paper was prepared for the Symposium entitled "After the Fall of Constantinople," held at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1968. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, Professor Inalcik was unable to be present, and his paper was read by Professor R. J. H. Jenkins.

The Publications Committee

Note: In transliterating the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian words I have followed the system used in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, with the following exceptions: ζ = j, ξ = ch, \imath = i, ω = sh, $\ddot{\sigma}$ = q, $\dot{\chi}$ = kh. The long vowels are rendered with the sign ^.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. V. L. Ménage for his translation of this paper from Turkish into English and for his many valuable suggestions. H. I.

WHEN in the spring of 1453 the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II appeared with his immense army before its walls, Constantinople was a half-ruined city whose population might at the most have numbered fifty thousand. As A. M. Schneider has shown,¹ from the time of the Latin occupation in 1204 the city had progressively declined until it was now in effect no more than a collection of villages. Already by the seventh decade of the fourteenth century Constantinople and its immediate neighborhood had formed only a small island surrounded by territories under Ottoman rule, with its communications by sea and its seaborne trade under the control of the Italian maritime states. Economically too the Ottoman capitals of Brusa and Adrianople had begun to overshadow the former imperial center. The old silk route from Persia via Trebizond to Constantinople had, by the end of the fourteenth century, been diverted to Brusa, which had then become the principal trading-center in Oriental products for the Genoese merchants of Galata, and toward which both the silk caravans from Persia and the spice caravans from Syria now converged.² In short, Constantinople was the dead center of a dead empire, which George Scholarius described before its fall as "a city of ruins, poor, and largely uninhabited."³

Mehmed II did not wish that the city which he envisaged as the future capital of his empire should pass into his hands, after sack, as a mere heap of ruins. In addressing to the Emperor Constantine his three invitations to surrender the city he was, it is true, merely obeying a precept of the Muslim Holy Law; but at the same time he was hoping to win a city which had not been exposed to pillage. To conquer the city by force—the legal term is '*anwatan*'—would inevitably lead to pillage and destruction; for this is a precept of the Holy Law; and no ruler could rob the fighters for the faith of this right to sack, which was granted to them by Allah. On the other hand, the Sultan was under pressure to bring matters to a swift conclusion. The Venetian fleet was at sea; rumors that the Hungarians would break the state of truce and march into the Balkans were causing uneasiness in the Ottoman camp; and the Grand Vizier Chandarli Khalil Pasha was pressing for the abandonment of the whole enterprise.⁴ At last, after a council of war had been summoned to make the final decision, the Sultan called for a general assault and proclaimed that the city was given over to sack; a decision dependent, according to the Holy Law, upon the permission of the *imām*, the leader of the Muslim community.

This proclamation was, of course, welcomed by the Muslim troops, but it is clear that the Sultan had been reluctant to make it. According to Ducas,⁵

¹ "Die Bevölkerung Konstantinopels im XV. Jh.," *Nachrichten der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse* (1949), No. 9, 234–44.

² H. Inalcık, "Bursa and the Commerce of the Levant," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient*, 3 (1960), 131–47.

³ Schneider, *op. cit.*, 236.

⁴ H. Inalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde tatkikler ve vesikalar* (Ankara, 1954), 126–32.

⁵ Bonn ed., 280; ed. V. Grecu, 349–51.

the ambassador whom he sent into the city before issuing the proclamation had put forward these arguments to induce the Emperor to submit: "Are you willing to abandon the city and depart for wherever you like, together with your nobles and their property, leaving behind the common people unharmed both by us and by you? Or do you wish that through your resistance . . . the common people should be enslaved by the Turks and scattered over all the world?" After the conquest the Sultan summoned to his presence the Megadux Lucas Notaras and asked him why he had not persuaded the Emperor to surrender the city, in which case, he added angrily, it would have been saved from all damage and destruction. The Megadux replied that they had indeed been ready to surrender, but that to do so was no longer in the Emperor's power or his own, for the Italians assisting in the defense had flatly refused to consent.⁶ Notaras, as is well known, was frequently at odds with the Italian defenders during the siege. An early Ottoman source confirms the report of the Byzantine historian on this point: "When every sector of the walled city was on the point of being destroyed, the Emperor summoned Lucas; they consulted together and took measures for the surrender. But the Frankish infidels were offended and protested; 'We will defend the city; we will not surrender it to the Muslims,' and they persisted in continuing the fight."⁷

The Ottoman Sultan, as a Muslim ruler, was obliged to act in conformity with the Muslim Holy Law, the *shari'a*. The *shari'a* decrees that if a community of *ahl al-kitâb* (literally, "people of the Book," in effect, Christians and Jews) rejects the obligatory invitation to surrender and continues to resist, they are to be treated as *mushrik's* (literally, "those who admit partners [to God]," in effect, polytheists). When they have been subdued "by force"—*'anwatan, qahran*—no rights are conceded to them: their goods are legitimate booty and they and their children are reduced to slavery. In the division of movable property, the Muslim ruler as *imâm*—one might say, the state—is entitled to one fifth.⁸ Immovable property—real estate—represents a different category of booty.⁹ According to a principle which long before the rise of the Ottomans had been accepted in Islamic land law, the freehold possession over land, whether acquired by force or by peaceful occupation, belonged to the *bayt al-mâl*, the state treasury; in other words, the land belonged to the state. The Ottomans, whose military and administrative organization reposed upon the *tîmâr* (feudal) system, adopted this principle in all its implications; even to propounding that an estate which had been made *vaqf* (i.e., placed in mortmain for the support of a pious object) might, if the pious object ceased to exist, revert to the freehold possession of the state. We shall see later how, in the last decade of his reign, Mehmed II, relying on this theory, "nationalized" a large proportion of *vaqf* estates.

⁶ Sphrantzes, Bonn ed., 291f.; cf. Chalcocondyles, Bonn ed., 390.

⁷ Oxford, Bodl. Marsh 313. On this work, see V. L. Ménage, *Neshri's History of the Ottomans* (London, 1964), 11–14.

⁸ For the *jihâd* (Holy War) and its consequences, see the section *Kitâb al-siyar* in Islamic legal textbooks, especially in *al-Durar* by Molla Khusrev, who was *qâdi'asker* in the reign of Mehmed II; also M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, 1955), 125ff.

⁹ F. Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation in the Classic Period* (Copenhagen, 1950), 38–92.

An Ottoman source reports that the Sultan proclaimed the assault and sack in these terms: "The stones and the land of the city and the city's appurtenances belong to me; all other goods and property, prisoners, and foodstuffs are booty for the troops."¹⁰ So Ducas also, who is well-informed in Ottoman affairs, reports¹¹ that the Sultan reserved the walls and buildings for himself but left all the movable property to the troops.

The Sultan had granted permission for three days of sack, but it is clear that he put an end to the pillage on the evening of the first day.¹² The Ottoman and the Byzantine sources agree in reporting that he felt profound sadness as he toured the looted and enslaved city.¹³ Not without significance are the stories told by contemporary sources of the sharp punishments which he decreed for soldiers caught destroying buildings.¹⁴

According to Tursun Beg,¹⁵ who was in the Sultan's entourage during those days, before leaving the city Mehmed II proclaimed "to his viziers and his commanders and his officers that henceforth his capital was to be Istanbul" and ordered the building of a palace. The word freely translated here as "capital" is *takht*, literally "throne": "My throne is Istanbul." Ever since the time of the steppe empires of Central Asia, a district called "*takht-ili*," the "throne region," had been for the Turks a specific region where the *khaqan*'s (emperors) resided, a sacred territory, the seat of the *khaqan*'s authority; and the most important prerequisite for claiming the title of *khaqan* was *de facto* occupation of this "throne region." This attitude corresponds to the Roman concept of imperial authority. In 1466 George of Trebizond, in a letter to the Sultan, wrote: "No one doubts that you are emperor of the Romans. Whoever holds by right the center of the Empire is emperor, and the center of the Roman Empire is Istanbul."^{15a} Mehmed II and his successors regarded themselves, through their possession of the throne of the Caesars, as emperors of Rome and legitimate heirs to all the territories which the emperors had formerly ruled. Thus, to Mehmed II, whose ambition was to establish a worldwide empire, Istanbul provided not merely a strategic center, but also an essential political and legal basis. It is for this reason that throughout his reign one of his main preoccupations and ambitions was to transform the half-deserted and ruined

¹⁰ Tâjî-zâde Ja 'fer Chelebi, *Mahrûse-i İstanbul Fethnâmesi*, appendix to *Târîkh-i Osmâni Enjümenî Mejmuası* (hereafter TOEM) (A. H. 1331), 19.

¹¹ Bonn ed., 281. The tale that the entire city, or part of it, surrendered on terms is a fiction invented later to give a legal coloring to the fact that Mehmed II left some churches in the possession of the Greeks; the *muftî* (head of the *ulema*) and, naturally, the Patriarch were willing to give it official sanction. The question is fully discussed by J. H. Mordtmann, "Die Kapitulation von Konstantinopel im Jahre 1453," *Byz. Zeitschrift*, 21 (1912), 129–44; Mordtmann thinks that the peace negotiations before the final assault may have helped to give rise to the story. It is discussed most recently by S. Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge, 1965), 153, 157, 199, 204; Runciman suggests (p. 153) that since the quarters of the city were separated by extensive open spaces, it was possible for the local officials of some quarters to make a last-minute submission.

¹² Runciman, *op. cit.*, 148.

¹³ Tursun Beg, *Târîkh-i Abû'l-Fath*, appendix to TOEM (1927), 57; Critoboulos, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1963), 149, English trans. C. T. Riggs (Princeton, 1954), 76f.

¹⁴ Ducas reports (Bonn ed., 298) that the Sultan himself drew his sword on a soldier damaging the pavement of Aya Sofya.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 59.

^{15a} F. Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit* (Munich, 1953), 266.

capital of the Caesars, which he had conquered, into a fitting center for this world empire which he sought to create; to rebuild it, to repopulate it, and to raise it to the status of a vital economic and political metropolis. The most faithful account of the Sultan's sustained and vigorous activity in promoting the regeneration of Istanbul is provided by Critoboulos; while in this, as well as in other respects, the most important Ottoman source is Tursun. The details they give, when supplemented by and compared with Ottoman documents relating to *vaqf*'s and Ottoman archive registers, present a clear picture of how the Sultan refounded Istanbul according to the traditions and the institutions of a Turco-Islamic city. Here we shall examine only the treatment which, in order to further this aim, he accorded to the Greeks and the policy which he pursued in dealing with the Byzantine buildings and sites which had come into his possession.

It must be remembered that the Ottomans, in reorganizing a conquered city, followed a series of established principles. According to the *shari'a*, the inhabitants of a city or town which had responded to the invitation to surrender were left undisturbed in their homes, with the status of *dhimmi*, and their lives, their possessions, and the practice of their religion were fully protected by the Islamic state. By a precept of the *shari'a*, "if they accept the *jizya* [i.e., the poll tax], that which is due to us [Muslims] is due also to them, and that which is obligatory upon us is obligatory also upon them";¹⁶ in other words, after a Christian population had agreed to pay the supplementary due of the *jizya*, to which Muslims were not liable, they obtained from the *imām* exactly the same rights and obligations as the Muslims enjoyed.

Bertrandon de La Broquière, who in 1432 travelled through Eastern Thrace along the old imperial road between Constantinople and Adrianople, speaking of the towns then occupied by the Ottomans¹⁷ reports of some of them that their citadels were destroyed and that they were newly populated, either entirely by Turks, or by Turks and Greeks together, whereas others were inhabited entirely by Greeks. When we consult the old Ottoman chronicles, we find that the towns inhabited by Greeks are always those which had responded to the summons to surrender. An early Ottoman chronicler¹⁸ writes:

[Murâd I] marched against the fortress town of Banatoz [Panados]. The infidels there immediately surrendered the fortress without fighting, and Murâd secured them in their former abodes. Then he went against Chorlu [Tzouroullos]; the infidels fought hard, but finally the lord of the town was struck in the eye by an arrow and they were left helpless. The troops swept into the fortress, there was great looting, and they destroyed the fortifications. Then they came to Misini [Mesene]; and its lord came forth with gifts to meet the Sultan.

¹⁶ *Mevqâfî Sherhi* (Istanbul, A. H. 1318), I, 340.

¹⁷ *Le voyage d'outremer*, ed. Ch. Schefer (Paris, 1892), 169–70.

¹⁸ *Çihânnümâ, die altosmanische Chronik des Mevlânâ Mehemed Neschrî*, ed. F. Taeschner, I (Codex Menzel) (Leipzig, 1951), 52–53. Cf. H. Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954), 112–29.

De La Broquière describes the citadel of Chorlu as being in ruins and the town as being repopulated by Turks and Greeks; Mesene, however, was “une petite place fermée [i.e., walled] et n'y demeurent que Grecz”; on the other hand he says of “Pirgas” (Pyrgos), which had been taken by force of arms: “tous les murs abattus et n'y demeure que les Turcz.”

A second principle which the Ottomans had observed from the earliest days in their reorganization of newly conquered territories was that of compulsory resettlement.¹⁹ Sixteenth-century decrees ordering such resettlement²⁰ show that it served a variety of social, political, and economic purposes: to restore to prosperity a deserted countryside or a ruined city, to restore to production a potential source of wealth, to move people from an overpopulated to an underpopulated region, to provide a means of livelihood to a landless community, and to remove to a distant territory and break up a rebellious population or a refractory tribe of nomads. When townsfolk were subjected to compulsory resettlement, a certain proportion of the population, e.g., the members of one household in ten, were selected by the *qâdî* of the town and its prefect (*subashi*), their names and descriptions were recorded in a register, and they were deported to their new home. There the deportees enjoyed a special status; for a specified period they were exempt from taxation but were forbidden to move elsewhere. It was a recurrent cause of complaint that, in the course of such deportations, wealthy and influential individuals who were reluctant to abandon their homes managed to win over the local authorities and procure their own exemption; but the central authorities knew well how essential to the rehabilitation of a city were merchants and craftsmen, and the Sultans made it a principal point of policy to resettle, especially in their capital cities, men of influence, wealthy merchants, and skilled craftsmen of newly conquered territories.

Although Constantinople had been taken *by force*, the Sultan did not hesitate, by using his authority as sovereign, to institute various measures which mitigated the grievous consequences that might otherwise have arisen from this. The preliminary measures which he took before leaving for Adrianople on 21 June concerned the defense of the city and its repopulation. First, says Crito-boulos,²¹ he presented splendid houses to all his dignitaries and officers, “and to some of them he even gave beautiful churches for their residences.” Then he settled the fifth of the enslaved Greeks—his share as ruler—“along the shores of the city harbor,” i.e., presumably, mainly in the Phanar region. “He gave them houses and exempted them from taxes for a specified time. . . . He also issued a proclamation to all those who had paid their own ransom, or who promised to pay it to their masters within a limited time, that they might live in the city; to them too he granted freedom from taxes and gave them houses, either their own or those of others.” So, too, some of the nobility were granted houses and were resettled. On the question of repopulating the city the

¹⁹ Inalcık, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest,” *loc. cit.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 122–29.

²¹ Ed. Grecu, 159; trans. Riggs, 83.

Sultan sought the advice of Notaras. He had thought, indeed, of making him prefect of the city and "putting him in charge of its repopulation," but abandoned this idea. (We shall return to the position of Notaras, for it has an important bearing on the Sultan's change of policy toward the Greeks.)

Further measures were taken to promote the repopulation of the city. As Critoboulos reports,²² "When the Sultan had captured the city of Constantinople, almost his very first care was to have the city repopulated." A number of building projects had to be undertaken without delay: the repair of the walls,²³ the construction of a citadel (Yedikule), and the building of a palace for himself in the Forum Tauri in the center of the city. For this work he used his Greek slaves, paying them a fairly good wage (six aspers or more, corresponding to the daily pay of a Janissary²⁴) so that they could ransom themselves with their earnings and settle as free men in the city. He had recourse also to compulsory resettlement, issuing orders that Christians, Muslims, and Jews should be sent to the city from every territory of his domains; Ducas states more explicitly²⁵ that he commanded that five thousand households be deported to Istanbul by September. Before leaving for Adrianople he appointed Karıştiran Süleymân Beg as prefect of the city; "He put him in charge of everthing, but particularly of the repopulation of the city, and instructed him to be very zealous about this matter."²⁶ From a letter of 16 August, published by N. Iorga,²⁷ we learn that the citadels of Silivri and Galata had been destroyed and their populations deported to Istanbul. In order to encourage people to settle in the city, the Sultan proclaimed that whoever came of his own accord, be he rich or poor, could select whatever abandoned house or mansion he chose, and be granted the freehold of it. Tursun, who reports this,²⁸ adds that numerous people on hearing this invitation came and occupied houses and mansions; but rich merchants, not being in need, did not leave their homes and ignored the invitation.

The Sultan returned to Istanbul in the autumn of 1453 to survey the progress made in the projects which he had initiated.²⁹ The chronology of his activities after the conquest has always been confused. During this second stay in Istanbul he appointed (6 January 1454) George Scholarios patriarch.³⁰ According to Sphrantzes, he did this simply "in order to encourage those Christians who had fled to return and settle in Istanbul." This was no doubt an important factor in the Sultan's decision; but the Ottoman sultans were always careful to represent themselves as protectors of the Orthodox Church against the

²² Ed. Grecu, 171; trans. Riggs, 93.

²³ There is an important document in the Archives of Topkapı Sarayı, No. E. 11975, relating to this.

²⁴ Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promontorio-de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475, ed. F. Babinger (Munich, 1957), 36.

²⁵ Bonn ed., 313.

²⁶ Ed. Grecu, 163; trans. Riggs, 85.

²⁷ Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV^e siècle, IV (Bucharest, 1915), 67.

²⁸ Op. cit., 60.

²⁹ Critoboulos, ed. Grecu, 169–75; trans. Riggs, 89–95.

³⁰ Runciman (op. cit., 155) is somewhat hesitant about this date, but according to the chronology of Critoboulos the Patriarch was appointed in the winter of 1453/4.

Latins. Documents dating from before the fall of Constantinople³¹ show that an Orthodox metropolitan or bishop in Ottoman territories was appointed by official patent (*berâî*) of the Sultan and might even, like other Ottoman functionaries, be assigned a *tîmâr*. It is thus easily understandable that, in the course of the Ottoman expansion, Orthodox priests frequently cooperated with the Ottomans against the Venetians. This policy of the Ottomans was in no way contrary to the *sharî'a* or to the Muslim tradition of the state.

According to Critoboulos,³² after appointing the Patriarch, the Sultan went to Brusa where, in the course of a residence of thirty-five days, he dealt with "all that had to do with local disturbances, revolts of leaders and peoples," and dismissed some governors. It is not difficult to see what lay behind these stern measures. We know that wealthy citizens of Brusa resisted deportation; nor should it be forgotten that, during this period in the history of this important commercial and industrial city, the guilds and the merchants engaged in the rich silk trade and industry could feel themselves powerful enough to attempt to resist the Sultan's orders. They failed; for there is documentary evidence³³ that deportations from Brusa were carried out and that the majority of these deportees played the main role in the establishment of the township of Eyüb. The Sultan returned again to Istanbul, and shortly afterward "he set out for Adrianople *in the winter*."³⁴

Some years later, in 1459, the Sultan took extraordinary measures to promote the prosperity and repopulation of Istanbul.³⁵ Chief among them was his summoning of the dignitaries to his presence and commanding each to found, in the quarter of his choice, a building complex consisting of pious foundations—that is, a theological college, a school, a public kitchen, all grouped around a mosque—and of such commercial buildings as a caravansary, a *khan*, and a market. The promotion of commerce and the increase of population were considered to be dependent upon the creation of such facilities. In the following years the Sultan himself, the Grand Vizier Mahmûd Pasha, and other viziers and dignitaries founded such building complexes at various points in the city, each grouped around a mosque; and each such center became the nucleus of a new quarter.³⁶ At the end of 1459 Mehmed II sent out orders that Greeks who,

³¹ See, e. g., *Süret-i defter-i sancak-i Arvanid*, ed. H. Inalcık (Ankara, 1954), Nos. 148, 162, 186, 200.

³² Ed. Grecu, 175; trans. Riggs, 95.

³³ In the register (No. A. 3/3) of the *qâdi* of Bursa.

³⁴ I.e., early in 1454. For a critique of F. Babinger's interpretation that the Sultan visited Anatolia in the summer of 1453, and that his purpose was to rest, see H. Inalcık's review article, "Mehmed the Conqueror (1432–1481) and His Time," *Speculum*, 35 (1960), 412f.

³⁵ Critoboulos, ed. Grecu 237–39; trans. Riggs, 140f.

³⁶ The fundamental sources for these building complexes are the endowment deeds (*vakfiyye's*) for the foundations established by the Sultan and his viziers. A list of the *vakfiyye's* relating to Mehmed II's foundations in Istanbul is given in *Fatih Mehmet II vakfiyeleri* (Ankara, 1938), 6–8. For the subject in general, see Ö. L. Barkan, "Şehirlerin teşekkül ve inkişaf tarihi bakımdan Osmanlı imparatorluğunda imâret sitelerinin kuruluş ve işleyişine ait araştırmalar," *Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mejmuaası*, 23/1–2 (1962–63), 239–96; *idem*, "Fatih Camii ve imâreti tesislerinin 1489–1491 yıllarına ait muhasebe bilânçoları," *ibid.*, 297–341; *idem*, "Ayasofya Camii ve Eyüp türbesinin 1489–1491 yıllarına ait muhasebe bilânçoları," *ibid.*, 342–79. Also, for Mehmed II's endowments, see Maliyeden müdevver deft., No. 2057, the Başvekâlet Archives, Istanbul; for the population of Istanbul, a *Defter-i Hânehâ-i İstanbul*, sene 1044, Belediye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, Cevdet yazmalari, No. O.

either before or after the conquest, had left Istanbul as slaves or refugees to live in other cities should return. According to Critoboulos,³⁷ there were then numerous Greek craftsmen who had settled in Adrianople, Philippopolis, Gallipoli, Brusa, and other cities, where they had become rich. All of these were brought to Istanbul, given houses and plots of land, and helped in other ways. That houses were granted not merely to Muslim immigrants but also to Christian deportees was probably one of the reasons for difficult relations between the two communities. Greek immigrants were brought to Istanbul by the Sultan also from his later conquests: from the two Phoceas in 1459; from the Morea after the second campaign of 1460;³⁸ in the same year a large proportion of the population of Imbros, Lemnos, Thasos, and Samothrace was transferred to the capital;³⁹ as were some of the inhabitants of Mitylene and the whole population of other towns on the island when Lesbos was occupied in 1462: "On his return to Constantinople the Sultan established the Mitylenians in one quarter of the city. To some *he gave houses*, to others land on which to build houses."⁴⁰ When the inhabitants of Argos in the Morea capitulated to Mahmûd Pasha in 1463, "he colonized all of them in Byzantium with their wives and children and all their belongings, safe and unhurt."⁴¹ So, too, Greeks were brought from Euboea in 1470 and from Caffa in 1475, though most of the Christians deported from the latter were wealthy Genoese and Armenians.⁴² A population list of 1477 shows these Genoese as numbering 267 families⁴³ (the figure four hundred given in Italian sources⁴⁴ is clearly an exaggeration). These deportees from Caffa founded the pleasant Istanbul quarter of Kefeli.

In the course of the campaigns waged against Karaman in the years 1468–74, numerous deportees—Turkish Muslims and Armenians—were brought to Istanbul from Konya, Larenda, Akseray, and Eregli.⁴⁵ Orders were issued that from each city some hundreds of households of craftsmen and wealthy citizens should be selected for transfer. Mahmûd Pasha's overly tolerant treatment of the rich and influential and his substitution of poorer citizens in their stead so angered the Sultan that this conduct was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the main reasons for Mahmûd Pasha's fall.⁴⁶ The population list of 1477 notes the immigrants from Karaman as a separate community, composed of 384 families. From the fact that they are noted separately it may be

68. A survey register of *vaqf*'s relating to Istanbul in the sixteenth century is being published by the Institute of Istanbul. From these and similar sources it is possible to put together a detailed picture of the development of Istanbul as a Muslim city.

³⁷ Ed. Grecu, 249; trans. Riggs, 148.

³⁸ *Idem*, ed. Grecu, 261; trans. Riggs, 157.

³⁹ *Idem*, ed. Grecu, 265; trans. Riggs, 159.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, ed. Grecu, 303; trans. Riggs, 185.

⁴¹ *Idem*, ed. Grecu; 317, trans. Riggs, 197.

⁴² M. Małovist, *Caffa, the Genoese Colony in the Crimea*, in Polish (Warsaw, 1947), 338.

⁴³ This document, drawn up under the supervision of the *qâdi* Muhyîeddîn, is in the archives of Topkapi Sarayı, No. D 9524 (see further, p. 247, *infra*).

⁴⁴ Małovist, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁵ Kemâl Pasha-zâde, *Tevârih-i Âl-i 'Osmân*, VII. defter (facsimile), ed. S. Turan (Ankara, 1954), 291 f. For the Armenians, see Eremya Çelebi Kömürcüyan, *Istanbul Tarihi*, Turkish trans. Hrand Andreasyan (Istanbul, 1952), translator's notes at pp. 93, 175, and (Genoese) 238.

⁴⁶ Kemâl Pasha-zâde, *op. cit.*, 291 f.; Neshîrî, *op. cit.* (see note 18), 203; Tursun Beg, *op. cit.*, 139.

deduced that the other Greeks and Muslims who had, willingly or unwillingly, immigrated earlier, were by this date already so well settled in as to be regarded as the basic population.

In order to ensure the provisioning of the city and palace, the Sultan was concerned also to restore to prosperity the neighboring villages which had been ruined or abandoned before and during the siege. After his later conquests he settled in these villages as slaves large numbers of peasants (30,000 altogether, according to one reckoning), with the status of *khâşş-qul* or *ortaqchi-qul*. They could not leave the village in which they were settled or marry outside it, and half of what they produced belonged to the state.⁴⁷ Such settlements of slave peasants were made after the Serbian campaign of 1455 and the two campaigns in the Morea of 1458 and 1460, and after the occupation of the islands of Zante, Cephalonia, and Aya Maura in 1479. (Critoboulos reports⁴⁸ that four thousand peasants were deported after the Morea campaign of 1458.) In the course of the sixteenth century these peasants were gradually to acquire the same status as the ordinary *re'âyâ* and to be assimilated in the general population, including that of Istanbul.

It is clear that, in carrying out the repopulation of Istanbul, Mehmed II did not pursue a policy of discrimination against the Greeks, whom he regarded as rightful subjects of the empire. Nevertheless, at various times in his reign, both in this matter and in the larger one of the whole administration, the policy of favoring the Greeks was abandoned for one of hostility toward them. The first sign of this is to be detected in an episode concerning Notaras.

Because of his opposition to the Italians, Notaras had a kind of claim on the favor of the Sultan; and the Ottomans had long since made it their general practice, as a matter of reasonable policy, to take such men into their service.⁴⁹ Both Critoboulos⁵⁰ and Sphrantzes⁵¹ reveal that at first Notaras, as well as several other members of the Byzantine aristocracy, received unexpectedly good treatment from the Sultan. In considering the reasons for his later unhappy fate, we may detect some matters of policy, more fundamental than was implied by the explanation—given by Ducas and Sphrantzes and adopted and repeated by Western historians⁵²—that he refused to sacrifice his son to the Sultan's lust.

In Critoboulos' account the Sultan had at first planned to make Notaras prefect of the city—a step which he must have regarded as necessary toward the promotion of his policy of repopulation. However, this was not without risk. At that time the Venetian fleet was in the Aegean. If, by an act of treachery,

⁴⁷ For these slave colonies, see Ö. L. Barkan, "XV ve XVIinci asırlarda Osmanlı imparatorluğununda toprak işçiliğinin organizasyon şekilleri," in *Istanbul Üniversitesi İkt. Fak. Mez.*, 1 (1940), 29 ff.; 2 (1941), 198–245.

⁴⁸ Ed. Grecu, 229; trans. Riggs, 133.

⁴⁹ Inalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," 112–22.

⁵⁰ Ed. Grecu, 159–63; trans. Riggs, 82–85.

⁵¹ Bonn ed., 292f.

⁵² Most recently S. Runciman, *op. cit.*, 157. For J. Moschos' work on the life of Notaras, see A. E. Bakalopoulos, "Die Frage der Glaubwürdigkeit der Leichenrede auf L. Notaras von Johannes Moschos," *Byz. Zeitschrift*, 3 (1959), 13–21.

the city, conquered with such difficulty, were to fall to the Latins, a second and harder siege would be required. According to Critoboulos⁵³ (who had high respect for Notaras), some influential members of the Sultan's entourage opposed this measure, saying that they (i.e., Notaras and the nine members of the Byzantine nobility who were his followers) "would do all they could against the city, or would desert to the enemy, even while remaining here"; it was this argument that made the Sultan change his mind and execute Notaras and his associates. Sphrantzes, who is hostile to Notaras,⁵⁴ maintains that he endeavored to win the Sultan's favor, wishing to preserve his former high position; but that the viziers persuaded the Sultan to execute Notaras. Now, it is well known that Mehmed II, again following practice, took into the Palace several sons of the Byzantine nobility to be brought up within the established system of training slaves for administrative posts—a system which, before the end of the century, was to produce two Greek-born Grand Viziers, Rûm Mehmed Pasha and Mesîh Pasha. The former Megadux, realizing that he would not be able to recover his previous position, must have decided not to hand over his son and son-in-law⁵⁵ to serve as Palace pages—in effect, hostages.

Immediately following his account of the execution of Notaras, Critoboulos notes that the "influential men" who had advised it were *shortly afterward* dismissed by the Sultan for this treachery and were severely punished. We know who they were: the elderly Shihâbeddin Pasha and Zaganuz Pasha, who had played most important roles in the conquest of Constantinople. It was they, too, who had been mainly responsible for the execution of Chandarlı Khalîl Pasha and who had made every effort to secure for themselves all the reins of power.⁵⁶ It is not impossible to trace the reasons for Mehmed II's sudden coldness toward these two men, his former tutors who had paved the way to his success. The execution of Khalîl Pasha had been regarded by the Janissaries, the intellectuals (*ulema*), and the people in general as having been prompted by spite,⁵⁷ and had caused much sorrow. After the execution of the Megadux, the Sultan, realizing that the recovery of the city was not progressing and now regretting the execution of Notaras, blamed the two Pashas. Thus, in 1456 both Zaganuz (the Grand Vizier) and Shihâbeddin (the second vizier) were dismissed.⁵⁸ Shihâbeddin Pasha had urged that houses vacated in the city should be granted to Muslim immigrants as freehold, and that the city should be quickly turkicized. As related above, Mehmed had returned to Greeks their former homes and distributed uninhabited houses among them; further, he had granted empty houses and mansions as freehold to immigrants who came voluntarily. 'Âşîqpaşazâde reports that houses were granted also to deportees. The passage runs:

⁵³ Ed. Grecu, 161; trans. Riggs, 84.

⁵⁴ See Bakalopoulos, *op. cit.*, 19.

⁵⁵ His younger son was taken into the Palace (Bakalopoulos, *ibid.*).

⁵⁶ See Inalcik, *Fatih devri üzerinde tatkikler ve vesikalalar*, 55–136.

⁵⁷ Sphrantzes, Bonn ed., 294.

⁵⁸ Inalcik in *Speculum*, 35, p. 413f.; *idem*, *Fatih devri üzerinde tatkikler ve vesikalalar*, 135.

And he sent officers to all his lands to announce that whoever wished should come and take possession in Istanbul, as freehold, of houses and orchards and gardens, and to whoever came these were given. Despite this measure, the city was not repopulated; so then the Sultan commanded that from every land families, poor and rich alike, should be brought in by force. And they sent officers with firmans to the cadis and the prefects of every land. And they, in accordance with the firman, deported and brought in numerous families, and to these newcomers, too, houses were given; and now the city began to become populous.⁵⁹

The procedure was that each immigrant, after choosing the house he wanted, went to the city prefect and received from him a note of recommendation; he took this note to the Porte—we recall here that real estate belonged legally to the Sultan and was therefore within his gift—and applied there for a freehold deed, a *mülknâme*.⁶⁰ Some of these documents have come to light in the archives of Topkapi Sarayı. The *mülknâme*'s are of various dates, the oldest I have found being of Ramadân 861, that is to say, July 1457. They grant full freehold tenure of real estate, according to the principles of the *shari'a*, so that they read: "It is to be in his possession; he may, as he wishes, sell it, or give it away, or make it *vaqf*; in short, he may enjoy it as freehold however he wishes." (There is a distinction here between this and real estate which remained *mîri*, i.e., state property: the freehold of the latter belonged to the state, and the holder who enjoyed it could *not* sell it, give it away, or make it *vaqf*.)

When, however, as a result of these various measures, the population had increased and the houses had been occupied, the Sultan gave orders that these houses should be subjected to survey and enregistered, and that *muqâta'a* should be collected in respect of them. In Ottoman state finances the term *muqâta'a* means in general the leasing or farming out to an individual—after agreement on the sum which the individual will pay—of a source of state revenue. In the context under consideration the term is to be understood as "rent," and in what follows the word "rent" will be used. The grounds for the Sultan's new decision were that the freehold had been granted only in respect of the building, not of the land which it occupied; and land could not be held without payment of rent.⁶¹

The task of making the survey was entrusted to Jübbe 'Alî Beg, city prefect of Brusa, who took with him as his clerk his nephew Tursun Beg, the historian, later an important official in the financial administration. Tursun himself tells⁶²

⁵⁹ 'Âşıqpashazâde, ed. Çiftçioğlu N. Atsız, in *Osmâni Tarihleri*, I (Istanbul, 1949), 193 (= § 124; cf. German trans. R. F. Kreutel, *Vom Hirtenzelt zur Hohen Pforte* [Graz, 1959], 200); cf. Neshri, *op. cit.*, 181.

⁶⁰ Tâjî-zâde Ja'fer Chelebi, *op. cit.* (see note 10), 24.

⁶¹ Tursun Beg, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 61f. According to the register of 1490 for the inspection of the *vaqf*'s of Aya Sofya (see note 67), some houses which had been made over to the church before the conquest were confirmed as *vaqf* by Mehmed II. A typical Arabic note recording this reads: *al-manâzil...kulluhâ yutaşarrafu bî'l-muqâta'a al-mawdû'a qâdimân fî zamân al-kufr wa'l-jâhiliyya al-mugarrara ba'd al-fâih 'alâ mâ kân 'alayhi fî zamân al-fâih wa-huwa al-marhûm Sultân Muhammad Khân al-mufattâh lahu abwâb al-rahma va'l-ghufrân wa'l-riḍwân* (fol. 50b; other such notes at fols. 43a, 45a).

how every house was visited, how every house, great or small, every orchard, and every garden was listed in a register, and how rent was imposed on each according to its value. In the course of the survey many houses changed hands because holders, finding themselves too poor to pay the rent demanded, moved to houses better suited to their circumstances. When the operation was completed, it was found that these rents would bring to the treasury an annual income of a hundred million aspers (*aqche*), that is to say, over two million Venetian ducats. For the period, this is an enormous sum: the total revenue of the Ottoman Empire around 1432 had been estimated at only two and a half million ducats.

Shortly after this survey, we find the Sultan issuing new orders, by which he abolished this rent "for his officers and his subjects" and again granted *mülknâme*'s. According to Tursun Beg,⁶³ who was closely concerned in the survey, the Sultan explained to one of his intimates why after so short a time he had taken this second decision which contradicted the first: the first measure had been prompted by the fact that many people had obtained freehold of houses beyond their means and status; they could not sell them, for there was no one to buy; but if these large houses and mansions remained in their possession they would inevitably fall into disrepair and ruin. Rent had been imposed, therefore, to induce everyone to take a house that suited his means; the primary intention had not been to raise revenue for the treasury.

The real reasons which prompted the Sultan to abandon this rich source of revenue are revealed by another historian, 'Âshiqpashazâde, who, unlike Tursun, was writing for the general public:

They imposed rent on the houses which they had given to these people [the deportees]. When this happened, the people found it more onerous and said: 'You forced us to leave our old homes, which we owned. Did you bring us here that we should pay rent for these houses of the infidels?' And some of them abandoned their wives and children and fled. The Sultan had an officer named Kavala (Kephalia) Shahin [that is, Shihâbed-dîn Pasha] who had served under the Sultan's father and grandfather and who had been vizier. He said to the Sultan: 'Come now, Your Majesty! Your father and your grandfather conquered numerous territories, but in not one of them did they impose rent; nor is it fitting that you should impose it.' The Sultan accepted what he said and abolished the rent and issued new orders: 'Whatever house you give, give it as freehold.' Then they gave a document in respect of every house that was given, stating that the house should be the freehold of the possessor. When things were arranged thus, the city began to be more prosperous; people began to build mosques, some built dervish convents and some built freehold properties, and this city returned to its former good state.⁶⁴

This passage shows clearly that the attempt to raise such a large revenue from the inhabitants of the city had given rise to strong opposition, and the

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, 61f.

⁶⁴ See *supra*, note 59.

outspoken language of 'Âşıqpashazâde doubtless reflects popular sentiment. To induce the Sultan to retract this measure had required the intervention of Shihâbeddin Pasha—the old and influential vizier who had been the Sultan's tutor and his greatest support. This change of policy must have occurred before 1457, for in that year we find that Shihâbeddin Pasha had already been dismissed.⁶⁵ The Topkapı Sarayı archives contain *mülknâme*'s belonging to the years immediately following, that is, 1457 to 1459.⁶⁶

In A. H. 861 (29 November 1456–20 October 1457) many of the houses surviving from the Byzantine period were, we find, made over by the Sultan to the *vaqf* of the mosque of Aya Sofya, the income arising therefrom as rent accruing to the *vaqf*. At various times further properties were made over as *vaqf* to the mosque; and these *vaqf* properties were inspected and checked twice during the reign of Mehmed II (once by the *qâdî·asker* Kebelü-zâde Muhyieddin Mehmed, and then by the *qâdî·asker* Fenârî-zâde 'Alâeddin 'Alî). In an inspection and survey made in 1490, during the next reign,⁶⁷ it is noted that some of the houses had been given to the *vaqf* in 861 (1456/7). According to this survey, in 1490 the real estate in Istanbul, Galata, and Üsküdar that belonged to the *vaqf* of the mosque consisted of 2,350 shops bringing in an annual rent of 458, 578 aspers; four caravansaries, various "rooms" (*hujarât, odalar*),⁶⁸ two baths, thirty shops selling millet beer (*boza*), twenty-two sheep-head shops bringing in a rent of 174,175 aspers; and 987 houses let at a total rent of 85,668 aspers. (We note in passing that at the then current rate of forty-nine aspers to the ducat these rents represented an annual income of some 14,500 ducats.) Most of the 987 houses must have survived from the Byzantine period. As to 111 of them, there is the following note: "After the conquest, before they were made *vaqf*, these houses were granted as freehold and their holders were given *mülknâme*'s; subsequently an annual rent of 9,655 aspers was imposed upon them; . . . and 178 houses, bringing in a rent of 11,509 aspers, were held by servants (*qul*) of the Sultan; thus, in 887 [1482] some of these holders were given *mülknâme*'s and others were given certificates cancelling the rent." Besides these houses belonging to the Sultan's servants whose freehold tenure was

⁶⁵ Inalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde tethikler ve vesikalar*, 134–36.

⁶⁶ Nos. E. 7222, E. 7232, E 3056/2. The city prefects (*subashi*) named as recommending the grant of *mülknâme*'s are Chakir Beg/Agha (1457), Murâd Beg (1462), Chakir Agha (again, 1466), Ilyâs Beg (1468). The register of the *vaqf*'s of Aya Sofya refers to houses in respect of which *mülknâme*'s had been granted in Rejeb 860 (= June 1456). It records also that in 861 (29 Nov. 1456–20 Oct. 1457), when there was a general inspection, many old houses and shops were made *vaqf*, the *mülknâme*'s being cancelled (same register, fol. 56a), these changes may be connected with the survey carried out by Jübbe 'Alî Beg.

⁶⁷ This register is No. 19 in the series "Maliye'den müdevver" in the Başvekâlet Arşivi in Istanbul. Composed by Kestelli Yusuf b. Khalil, its preface states that the inspection was made on the basis of registers drawn up by Kebelü-zâde and Fenârî-zâde. It contains a detailed listing of the *vaqf*-properties of Aya Sofya situated in Istanbul, Galata, and Üsküdar. Another survey register of the Aya Sofya properties, made in 926 (= 1520), is in the Belediye Kütüphanesi, M. Cevdet yazmaları, No. 64. The annual accounts for the years 893, 894, and 895 have been published by Ö. L. Barkan (see note 36: "Ayasofya Camii . . .").

⁶⁸ In such contexts *hujra* or *oda* usually means a fairly large room used as a separate workshop or lodging, as appears from the entries in the Aya Sofya register. At the same time, complete houses were sometimes apparently called *hujra* or *oda*. Such "rooms" were built in markets and bazaars as workshops and lodgings (T. Gökbilgin, *Edirne ve Paşa Livası* [Istanbul, 1952], 503).

recognized or whose rent was cancelled in 1482, there is reference to other houses for which the rent had been cancelled earlier, in Fenârî-zâde's previous survey, because they were held by servants of the Sultan. It may be said in general that houses surviving from the Byzantine period which had been granted to such servants were always given special treatment and made rent free.

As to the houses granted in freehold to private individuals, they became the subject of controversy once again in the years 1471 and 1472. When Rûm Mehmed Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier in 1471,⁶⁹ he embarked on a series of extraordinary financial measures. These were mainly prompted by the sudden increase in expenditure brought about by the stubborn resistance of Karaman, and by the sack of Tokat and the invasion of Karaman by Uzun Hasan's forces in the following year.⁷⁰ Once more we find in 'Âshiqpashazâde —who was violently hostile to Rûm Mehmed Pasha—the pronounced reaction to the change made at this date. He says:⁷¹

There came to the Sultan a certain vizier who was the son of an infidel and had won high favor with the Sultan. The former infidel inhabitants of this city of Istanbul had been friends of this vizier's father. They came to him and said: 'What do you think you are doing? These Turks have restored the city. Have you no spirit? They have taken your father's home and our homes and occupy them before our very eyes. Come now! You are the favorite of the Sultan. Exert yourself so that these people may cease the restoration of this city, and it may be left, as it was before, in our possession.' The vizier said: 'Let us reimpose on them that rent which was imposed earlier on, so that they may refrain from building freehold houses; thus the city will again fall into ruin and finally be left in the possession of our people.' One day this vizier found an occasion for suggesting this idea to the Sultan and got the rents reimposed. They sent out one of these deceitful infidels, accompanied by a nominally Muslim servant of the Sultan, who did whatever this deceitful infidel told him to do, and they wrote it all down.

Question: Who is this vizier?

Answer: It is Rûm Mehmed Pasha, whom the Sultan caused to be strangled like a dog.

... and because of this rent the people began to refrain from restoring Istanbul.

If the Sultan is capricious in the decrees he makes
Then his territory always suffers harm.

And if his vizier should be an infidel,

He always seeks to cause damage to the true faith.

And the blame for the reimposition of this rent which we now have to pay rests with this Rûm Mehmed.

⁶⁹ For the date, see Inalcik, in *Speculum*, 35 (see *supra*, note 34), 414.

⁷⁰ See Inalcik, s.v. "Mehmed II," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, VII, p. 525; Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*, 326f.

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, § 124 (see *supra*, note 59).

Although this bitter passage of 'Âşıqpashazâde has been quoted by historians,⁷² its true historical significance and the reasons prompting it have not been considered. It should be recalled that, in other contexts too, 'Âşıqpashazâde gives vent to his hostility to Rûm Mehmed Pasha and thereby reflects also the feelings of a specific group in Ottoman society. Behind his hostility lie the facts that among the various financial measures taken by Rûm Mehmed Pasha there was, besides his reimposition of the previously cancelled rent, his abolition (doubtless for reasons of economy) of the gifts and bounties customarily distributed by the Palace to dervishes and sheykhhs,⁷³ the class to which 'Âşıqpashazâde himself belonged. These measures evidently caused a violent reaction among the Muslim populace, especially in religious circles. It may be true that the Pasha's descent inclined him to favor the Greeks and that at this period Greeks exercised some influence in the Palace and in state affairs;⁷⁴ but 'Âşıqpashazâde's assessment of Rûm Mehmed Pasha's motives must be viewed with some reserve, for the measures the Pasha had instituted remained in force, even after his dismissal and execution,⁷⁵ during the rest of Mehmed II's reign. Under his successor, however, these questions were reconsidered.

In 887 (1482), shortly after Bâyezîd II's accession, when many of his predecessor's financial measures were abolished, the Sultan considered also the matter of the rents and cancelled them, particularly in respect of houses held by what the documents call *qul*'s. This word, translated here as "officer" or "servant," is applied to state officials of whatever rank; it embraces, and sometimes specifically means, the Janissaries, the group which in 1481 had helped Bâyezîd to the throne.⁷⁶ A firman dated Rebî' I, 889 (April 1484) reads:⁷⁷

⁷² Cf. Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*, 487.

⁷³ 'Âşıqpashazâde, ed. Atsız (see *supra*, note 59), 243–44. For specimen entries in a register recording such donations made by the Palace, see Gökbilgin, *op. cit.*, 470–85.

⁷⁴ After the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II caused young members of the Byzantine nobility to be brought into his service in the Palace—i.e., to be trained for state service in the various "chambers" of the Palace School (see Critoboulos, ed. Grecu, 163–65; trans. Riggs, 85f.); after the occupation of Aenos and of Trebizond too he took into the palace groups of children of the nobility (Critoboulos, ed. Grecu, 197, 287; trans. Riggs, 110, 175). The Palaeologue Khâşş Murâd (for whom see F. Babinger, "Eine Verfügung des Paläologen Châşş Murad-Paşa...," in *Documenta Islamica inedita* [Berlin, 1952], 197–210) was appointed beylerbey of Rumeli in 1471, i.e., during the Grand Vizierate of Rûm Mehmed Pasha (*Die frôhosmanischen Jahrbücher des Urudsch*, ed. F. Babinger [Hanover, 1925], 126). It may be significant that in his history, written for presentation to the Sultan, Critoboulos did not hesitate to express his sorrow over the executions of the members of the Byzantine aristocracy.

⁷⁵ He was executed in 1474; see Inalcık, in *Speculum*, 35, p. 415.

⁷⁶ According to the Aya Sofya register, the *qul*'s whose houses were exempted from rent were described as *yenicheri*, *sekban*, *sipâhi*, *jebeci*, *topju*, *arabaji*, *yayabashi*; the Palace servants as *helvaji*, *gapiji*, *sarrâj*, also *kâtib* and *münejjim*. There are notes of several Janissaries engaged in commerce and industry in the markets and holding shops at a rent. The register shows also that high-ranking members of the military class—*beg*'s and *ulema*—held several houses by virtue of *mülknâme*'s; thus the governor of Istanbul, Chakır Agha, had houses in various quarters of the city; a big house in the Germiyân quarter was granted by *mülknâme* to the *khattâb* of Galata, Mevlânâ 'Ali, and another to the children of Za'im 'Ali. Non-Muslims also possessed houses: in Shawwâl 863, houses were granted by *mülknâme* to "Manul Komnen," "Nikefor," and the sons of "Yorgi"; the house belonging to "Angelina," in the same quarter, was given to the bootmaker Davud, and a house belonging to a Greek woman, "Zabya," to Re'is 'Ali. "Pandeliyo Moris," who had lost his *mülknâme*, was given a new one in A. H. 889 (his house was a big one, assessed at a rent of 250 *aqche*'s).

⁷⁷ The register "Maliye'den müdevver," No. 19 (see note 67), fol. 52.

I have abolished rent in respect of all my servants who receive a stipend from me and are actually living now in houses and on sites liable to rent in Istanbul⁷⁸ and Galata which belong to the *vaqf*'s of the Aya Sofya Mosque; from such as these, rent is not to be demanded. But, as for those who are my servants and do not receive a stipend, as they are brothers or relatives of my servants, from them rent is to be demanded for the houses and the sites they occupy which are liable to rent and belong to the *vaqf*. For the future, whoever takes over a house or a site liable to rent, whether he be a servant of mine receiving a stipend or not, from him the rent for the house and site where he lives is to be collected, not cancelled.

Bâyezîd thus cancelled the rents only for those who at that date were actually in his service.

When he issued this firman, in April 1484, he was making preparations for his first major campaign, in Moldavia, the success of which was to strengthen his own prestige as Sultan. Now it was at this very time that 'Âshıqpashazâde was writing his history,⁷⁹ and he was evidently prompted to devote a separate chapter to the question of rents because their partial cancellation then had once more made them a subject of discussion in Istanbul. From his account it is clear that public opinion objected to the rents on the grounds that they were contrary to the *shari'a*, that they favored the Greeks, and that Mehmed II, having first granted the properties as freehold, then, "led astray" by Greeks, had gone back on his word. It should be remembered also that, upon Bâyezîd's accession, the appointment of Khalil Pasha's son Ibrâhîm as *qâdî'asker* reflected a reaction against the too frequent recourse, during Mehmed's reign, to the doctrine of the Sultan's executive authority ('örf)⁸⁰ to justify measures which many felt to be contrary to the *shari'a*. When, in these years, such measures were abolished, it was always the *shari'a* which was adduced to require their abolition. All the Ottoman historians writing in Bâyezîd's reign—'Âshıqpashazâde, Neshrî, Tursun, Idrîs, Kemâlpasha-zâde—praise him for reviving the authority of the *shari'a* and for promoting "justice."

From the record of the inspection made in 1490 of the imperial *vaqf*'s of the Aya Sofya mosque, which included many house properties liable to rent, it is possible to identify other principles which had been laid down in applying the new policy.

First, as we have seen, rent has been cancelled for houses owned and occupied by *qul*'s who are in the immediate service of the Porte; it remains in force, however, for houses owned by *qul*'s who have been granted a *timâr* and thus have left the immediate service of the Porte, and for houses which have passed by sale or inheritance into the possession of others. Second, "in accordance with the precept of the *shari'a*," rent has, in principle, been cancelled

⁷⁸ The register used the name Islambol (a folk etymology meaning "full of Muslims") rather than Istanbul; elsewhere the register speaks of "Qostantaniyye."

⁷⁹ See the Introduction to Giese's edition.

⁸⁰ On this subject, see H. Inalcik, in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. "Örf."

for houses which had been granted in freehold by *mülknâme* to private individuals before the endowment was made, but upon which rent had later been imposed; thus we find that rent has been cancelled for some houses by an "imperial document of cancellation" (*ref'nâme-i hümayûn*), but for the great majority it has been confirmed. In the register of the *vaqf*'s each property has a separate note affirming its position.

A third case is that of houses subject to rents which have been made over to the *vaqf*. These represent houses which had fallen into ruin and upon whose sites new houses or shops had been built: in this event, they were subject to rent only in respect of the land on which they stood, in accordance with the principle "rent due on land does not lapse with the deterioration of the building upon it."

The Byzantine houses which came into the hands of the Ottomans thus presented the Ottoman authorities with an awkward problem of policy, a problem which not only affected the Ottoman financial departments but also had repercussions upon the questions of the settlement of Muslims in Istanbul and of Ottoman policy toward the Greeks; it became more and more complex in relation to the further factors that some were occupied by *qul*'s and some had been made over as *vaqf*.

Generally speaking, and admittedly with the intention of restoring the city to prosperity, Mehmed II gave favorable treatment to the Greeks. The census of the city made under the supervision of the *qâdî* Muhyîeddîn in 1477 shows the following population figures, by households, for Muslims and Greeks:

	<i>Istanbul</i>	<i>Galata</i>
Muslims	8,951	535
Orthodox Greeks	3,151	592

All the other communities collectively—Armenians, Latins and Gypsies—amount only to 3,095 households.⁸¹ As we have seen, a large proportion of the Greeks had been brought to Istanbul by compulsory resettlement from the Morea and elsewhere.

It is a prominent characteristic of Mehmed II's policy that he sought to give prime emphasis in state affairs to the principle of '*örf* (in Arabic, '*urf*), the executive competence of the ruler, and thus win absolute and unlimited authority for his own decisions. His contemporaries thought that he had pushed the principle too far. At his death, as we have seen, many of the measures which he had taken—although responsibility for them was imputed not to him but to his viziers—were declared to be contrary to the *shari'a*. In a letter of advice addressed to his successor,⁸² the writer maintained that Mehmed, "by the counsel of mischiefmakers and hypocrites," had "infringed the Law of the Prophet and impaired the good order of the land," and advised the new Sultan to follow in the steps not of his father but of his grandfather

⁸¹ For this document, see *supra*, p. 238 and note 43. It may be noted that it records 3,667 shops in Istanbul and 260 in Galata.

⁸² The letter is found in a MS of the *Menâhiju'l-inshâ*, in Izzet Koyunoğlu's library at Konya.

Murâd II. Certainly, Mehmed II was a man of a different stamp from his son Bâyezid II; also from his great-grandson Süleymân, upon whose orders the *muftî* Abû's-Su'ûd tried to bring the executive regulations of the Empire into conformity with the *shari'a*. In settling Greeks in Istanbul and leaving churches in Christian hands, which Mehmed II undertook in order to promote the city's prosperity, he invoked the principle of 'örf rather than the authority of the *shari'a*, as being in the best interests of the state. It is true that the religious scholars of his day—chiefly the *qâdi'asker* Molla Khusrev, who had been closely connected with him since his childhood—did not regard these measures as contrary to the *shari'a*, precisely because they served the best interests of the Muslim community.⁸³ But when Mehmed's protection of the Greeks enabled them to form a substantial proportion of the population of the city, and when they began to gain wealth and influence in trade, in the guilds,⁸⁴ and through the farming of rich customs and mineral concessions,⁸⁵ then, not unnaturally, a certain hostility between them and the Muslim Turkish population developed; or, rather, the hostility, already apparent immediately after the conquest in the incident of Lucas Notaras, was exacerbated. Thus, from time to time in the reigns of Mehmed's successors the question was raised whether it was not contrary to the *shari'a* that Greeks should be living in a city taken by force of arms and that some of its churches should be left in Christian hands. In 1538, when for various special reasons⁸⁶ this question was raised again, it was necessary to obtain a *fetvâ* (i.e., a written opinion of the *muftî*) in order to protect the Greek population. The *fetvâ* justified the situation on the fictitious grounds that during the siege the Jews and the Christians had made a secret compact with Mehmed II and had refrained from assisting the Byzantine

⁸³ For this question, see *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. "Örf."

⁸⁴ According to the Aya Sofya register of 1490, among the leading merchants of the Bedestan there were only two Armenians, five Jews, and three Greeks, all the remaining 122 businesses belonging to Muslims. In the market guilds, too, the Muslims were greatly in the majority (the names of non-Muslims appearing, without distinction, in the lists of Muslim names): thus, in the market around the Bedestan, of forty-one carpenters' shops only one belonged to an Armenian; of forty workshops making pots and pans sixteen belonged to Greeks (from Mitylene, the Morea, and Galata); of thirty-four grocers only four were Greeks; and all the 142 shops in the saddlers' quarter belonged to Muslims. But the Greeks were particularly active in big tax-farming operations and in the trade by sea (see note 85).

⁸⁵ Under Mehmed II the Greeks were enabled to engage in commerce under more favorable conditions than had existed before. Since they were *dhimmi* subjects of the Sultan, the whole Empire was open to them as a field for their commercial activities and they enjoyed protection, especially against the Italians, who were subjected to a higher customs tariff than the Greeks. Thus, they gradually supplanted the Italians, particularly in the Black Sea trade and in trade with the countries of Northern Europe. The customs registers for the ports of Kilia (on the estuary of the Danube), Akkerman (at the mouth of the Dniester), and Caffa show that toward the end of the fifteenth century Greek ship captains and merchants were numerous: of twenty-five ships calling at Akkerman in 1490, fifteen belonged to Greeks (of the rest, six belonged to Muslims, three to Italians, and one to an Armenian). I am preparing a study on this trade; for the present see my article, "Bursa and the Commerce of the Levant" (*supra*, note 2). For the customs system and for Greek farmers of taxes, dues, and concessions, see my "Notes on N. Beldiceanu's translation . . .," *Der Islam*, 43 (1967), 152–56.

⁸⁶ The fall of Coron in the Morea to the Emperor Charles V's fleet in 1532 caused consternation in Istanbul, and was attributed to treachery on the part of the Greeks; a Venetian report of 1535 (*Calendar of State Papers, Spain* [London, 1838], V/I, doc. 197) said: "Albania and the surrounding provinces, chiefly inhabited by Christians, are only waiting for news of the Emperor or his fleet going to Constantinople to rise in rebellion."

Emperor: it was allegedly for this reason that the Sultan had not enslaved them but left them in their homes.⁸⁷ Similarly, too, in the course of the sixteenth century it was felt to be scandalous that Christians should hold *tîmâr*'s and serve the Sultan as *sipâhi*'s (cavalry), whereas in the reign of Mehmed II, and before, it had been regarded as completely normal that Christians, Greek Orthodox among them, should serve as *sipâhi*'s.⁸⁸ Furthermore, shortly after 1500 the historian Idrîs had commented that in leaving these Christians undisturbed the Sultans had had in view the prosperity of the world and of the Muslim religion.

Postscript: After this article had gone to press Professor B. S. Baykal, of the University of Ankara, brought to my attention a photocopy of a survey-book of Galata produced toward the end of 1455. How this new original source will affect the points dealt with in this paper can be discussed only when Prof. Baykal's publication of the survey-book makes it available for study.

⁸⁷ See note 11, *supra*.

⁸⁸ For Christian *sipâhi*'s, see Inalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde tarihikler ve vesikalalar*, 137–84.